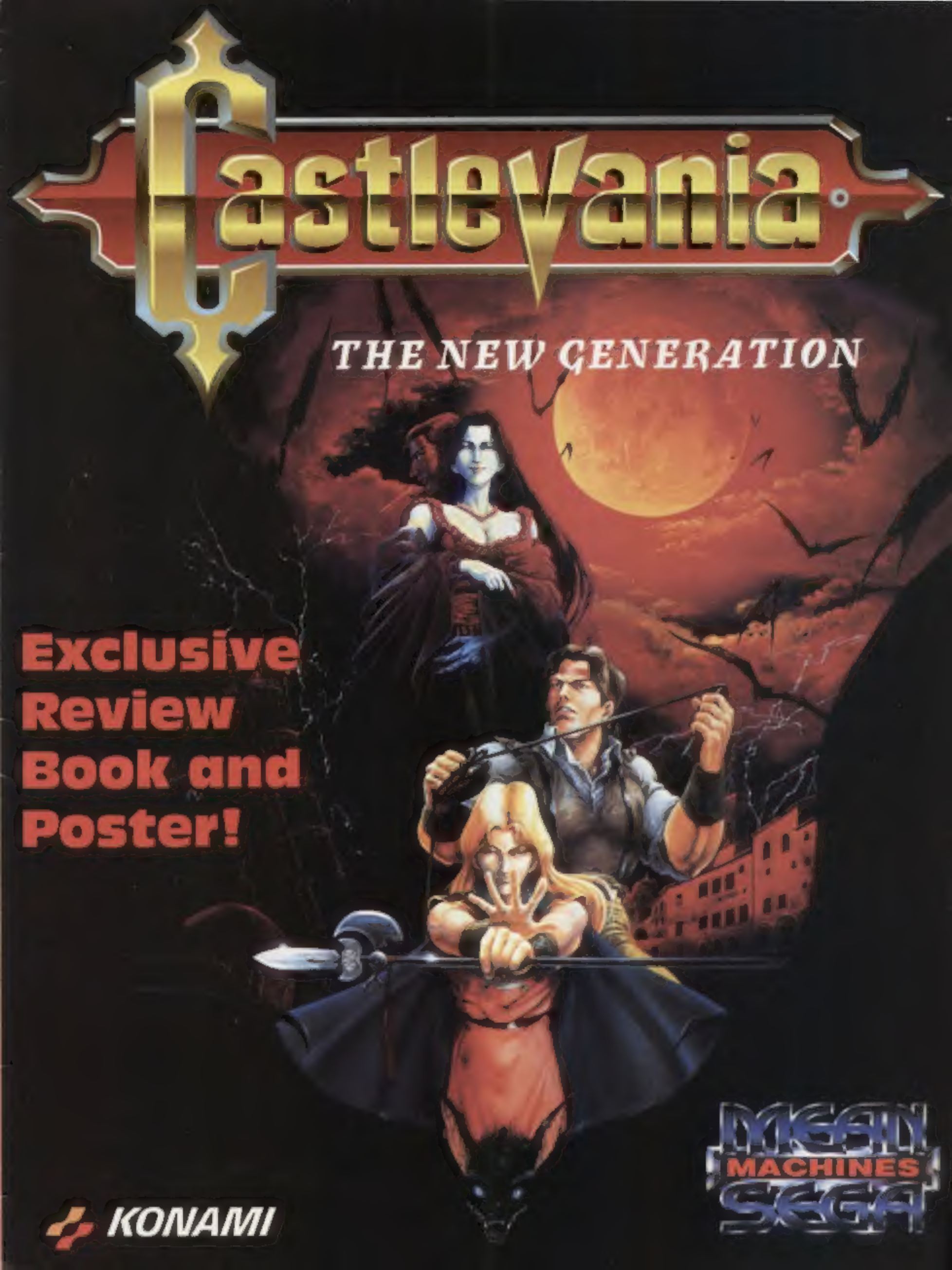
Castlevania

THE NEW GENERATION



Exclusive Review Book and Poster!

KONAMI

MEAN MACHINES SEGA

Castlevania

THE NEW GENERATION

Mean Machines Sega is proud to bring you this lavish in-depth review of Konami's new blockbuster, Castlevania: The New Generation. This is probably the most eagerly awaited product from Konami since they began releasing Megadrive games early in 1993. Castlevania was massively successful on the Nintendo formats, outsold only by the Mario and Zelda games. We're sure our review will convince you of similar success on the Megadrive. Welcome to the banquet, now enjoy the feast...

In the early years of the Twentieth Century, Europe was a confident, bustling continent, much as it is now. But to the East, as the forests thicken and darken, and the higher lands are cloaked in a thick fog, there is a darker side at the heart of Europe. For many, the name of Transylvania is a chill sound, as it rings of witchcraft, vampirism and other such abominations that come from the half-existence of the undead: creatures of evil denied the peace of death.

One such wretch is Elizabeth Bartley. Once a Transylvanian witch of the 1500s, she gorged on the blood of 1000 rural maidens before dying in torment upon the stake, torched by peasants and their priest. Bartley's restless soul was raised by Dracia Tzeuntes, a witch struggling to promote the dark ways at the brink of the bright, new Twentieth Century. Bartley's limitless evil provided a focus for the Dark Side, to enslave all the people of Europe.

Meanwhile, evil had endured a setback, in the form of Dracula's demise. This monstrous creature had fed off centuries of souls, and only the effort of Quincy Morris, descendent of the Belmont family of vampire killers was enough to destroy him. Sadly, Quincy perished in the attempt.

Enraged, Bartley prepares a Ceremony of Evil, to revive Dracula. John Morris, son of Quincy is aware of her plans, and once more the fate of the Belmonts moves into the realm of the night. John is joined in Romania by Eric Lecarde, a Spaniard whose fiancé was one of Bartley's victims. They take their holy weapons and set out for Dracula's decaying fortress...

THE NEW GENERATION

There is a choice of two characters for the new adventure, although only one may play at a time. The difference between the pair comes in weapon choice. John's whip and Eric's spear react in characteristic ways, forcing you to develop different tactics for each of the levels, depending on who you are controlling. The level route also changes in parts, again according to the character.

JOHN MORRIS

John is the descendent of Quincy Morris, and in turn, Simon Belmont. For centuries this family has fought with magical whips. John has also learned whip combat. The whip is versatile, fast and may be extended in mid-air by holding the button. It starts as a short leather weapon, but extends in length and increases in power as a chain item.

WHIP FIRING UP
WHIP DOWN
POWERED WHIP

SPECIAL MOVE

John's whip has a hook to grapple onto the ceiling. Extend the whip upwards and hold. If the ceiling is within range you can swing on the whip for a few seconds. Move up or down to lengthen or shorten the whip. This attack may be used to cross gaps, or swing across the heads of enemies.

WHIP HOOK GRAPPLE

ERIC LECARDE

Eric was once a normal rural Spaniard, who had been trained in the way of the Alcarde Spear. He learned of his fate from a mysterious nomad, and since has been embroiled in the war against evil. His spear is slower than the whip, but has the advantage of being longer and more versatile. With extra power, the spear attains a barb at its head, and later a ring of holy fire. By holding the A button and switching directions, Eric performs a neat spinning spear attack.

SPINNING SPEAR ATTACK
SPEAR UPWARDS
SPEAR BARB
HOLY FIRE

SPECIAL MOVE

Eric has a sneak jump move which pushes his spear in a swift vertical attack. It's activated by holding down, and then pressing B when Eric glows. Eric has the advantage of being invulnerable while in the air. The attack may also be used to reach higher platforms.

JUMP ATTACK

SACRED RELICS

These weapons are not the only ones our characters carry into battle. There are relics of holy power that both may handle in addition. Axe, boomerang and holy water have limited charges, and may be powered up to devastating effect.

AXE

BOOMERANG

HOLY WATER

STAGE 1 DRACULA'S CASTLE

You start in the grounds of the ominous pile, with crows picking on the carcasses of other unfortunate victims. Inside the castle, skeletons assault you with their own bones as you move from room to room. A razor-sharp pendulum swings across your path, and then you must run the gauntlet of a massive collapsing bone bridge. Your ascent takes you nimbly across spiked trap platforms, mace-swinging guards and out onto the roof to enjoy the full moon.

▲ *The gloomy approach to Castle Dracula.*

▲ *A Dance of Death in the dramatic ballroom.*

▲ *The sharp calamity of the pit and pendulum.*

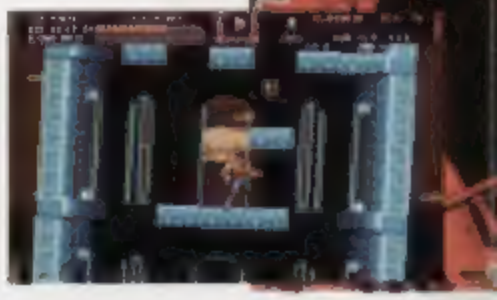
STAGE 2 SHRINE OF ATLANTIS

The ancient city rises from the deep, another omen of Bartley's odious intention. This long section takes you across the ruins of Atlantis, with reflective waters lapping against your platform path. Inside the shrine, the tides rise inexorably at the whim of an aquatic sorcerer. Medusa's heads and water monsters attack as you descend on some flotsam. Then you must cross long submerged ruins, breaking the massive stone obstacles of pillars and past monuments.

▲ *Still waters run deep.*

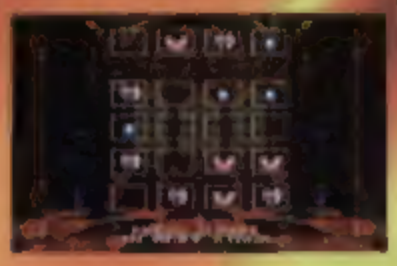
STAGE 3 THE LEANING TOWER OF PISA

The mysterious lop-sided tower is a magnet for Bartley. In the square around the tower, minotaurs seize the stone supports to use as weapons, and flying harpies attack from overhead. Then follows a treacherous ascent on the long stairways and tilting floors of the tower. The structure even rocks alarmingly! The final confrontation is upon the very top, after perilous leaps on stepping stone platforms.



CIPHERS

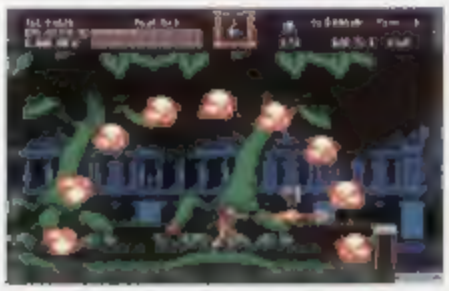
The game has a cipher tablet which gives a pictorial password to each of the game's seven levels. Recreate the pattern on the options screen.



▲ *The gloomy interior of the French chateau.*

▲ *The statues weep tears from centuries of neglect.*

◀ *Charging minotaurs.*

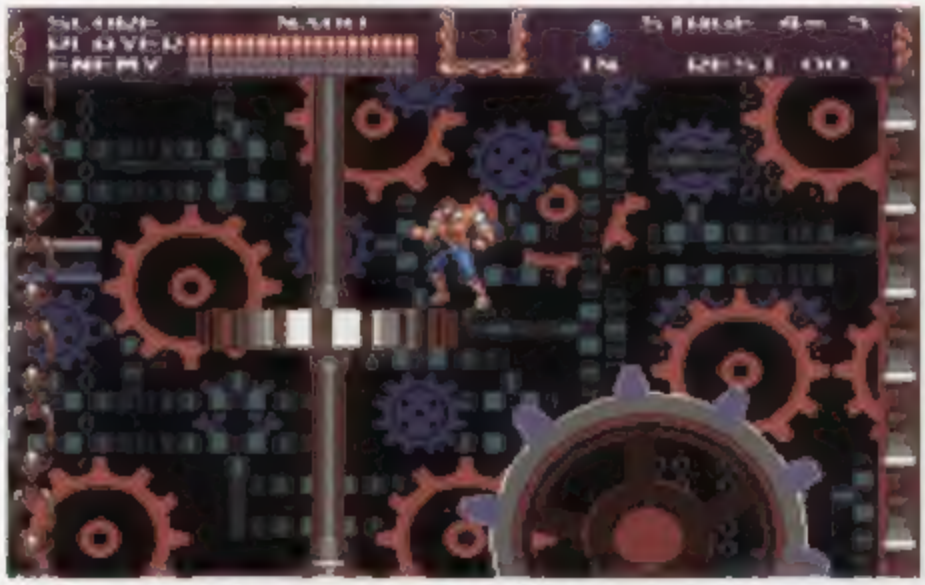


▲ *Even the gardens are sown with evil.*

▲ *Stained glass - tinted with your blood.*

STAGE 4 GERMAN STEEL WORKS

Evil makes its home in the dark satanic mills of the German industrial complex. Skeletons guards, complete with army helmets attack with a variety of weapons. The level leads through a network of crushing pistons and into a maze of cogs and slowly revolving wheels. There's a chasm to cross, on a precarious pulley, and a series of giant razor-sharp gears to negotiate.



▲ *Crushed by the wheels of industry.*

▲ *No escape from the brooding Schloss.*

▲ *It's easy to lose your footing on these.*

BOSSES

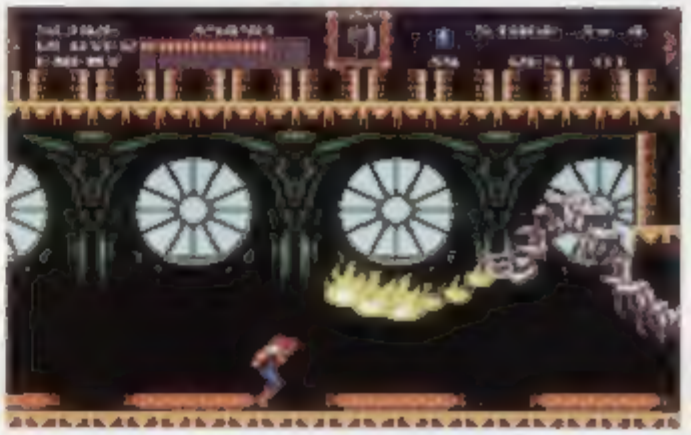
Castlevania has two bosses for each of its levels. The second one is the toughest. He has an energy bar shown below yours, of equal length. Destroy the second boss to reveal the jewel. All bosses have a variety of ingenious attacks:

LEVEL ONE BOSS

A giant warrior with weapons in both hands. He even fights with his feet.

LEVEL THREE BOSS

The heroes get a shock at the top of the tower with this flying demon. You are trapped on the pinnacle, while he has complete mobility.



LEVEL TWO BOSS

The massive rock monster, who towers above John and Eric, and brings the ceiling crashing down.

LEVEL FOUR BOSS

Cogs spring to life in the agile clockwork boss, one of the trickiest in the entire game.

▲ *A shattering Hellhound.*

▲ *A mace-wielding maniac.*

▲ *A pike-wielding psychopath*

▲ *Some German zombie.*

1 PLAYERS

PRICE £44.99

BY KONAMI

RELEASE FEBRUARY

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: 3-5
SKILL LEVELS: 2
RESPONSIVENESS: MEGA
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
36,000

ORIGIN

The latest Castlevania episode features ancestors of the characters featured in four Nintendo games.

HOW TO CONTROL

The D-pad left and right controls movement, up and down directs your weapon.

A WEAPON

B JUMP

C SPECIAL

S PAUSE

HOW TO PLAY

Walk through each level, destroying the evil forces and collecting the jewels protected by the bosses.

GUS

Personally, Castlevania has been the one I've been waiting for from Konami. The SNES game blew me away completely with its fast action and stunning graphics. All in all, Castlevania on the Megadrive is a worthy descendent in the family line. Although there's nothing radically new in the platform beat 'em up action, the game is put together in such slick fashion and is so damn playable that I was hooked. Generally the graphics are excellent, and feature some great special effects, like the rocking tower of stage three, and the heroes are well animated. The new character of Eric and his spear is inspired: it's such a cool weapon to handle, and the extra firepower and ultimate items are all good additions. The bosses are imaginative, although a little too easy to beat in places. However, Castlevania has been tailored perfectly as a challenge for the average games-player, who'll have a hell of a lot of fun completing it. I'm impressed.

LUCY

I'm not sure why I like Castlevania so much since there's no one thing which stands out and screams Megagame. The idea isn't original and the graphics are good but not outstanding. But all the elements slapped together in true Konami style add up to one hell of a good game. It's slick and as smooth as silk to control and the whole game is really playable and draws you in right from the word go — and such is the addictivity that it keeps you there until the bitter end. The sound on Castlevania is really cool — gothy classical music rings forth which really tickles your play-buds. Some of the animation and special effects are spectacular and the weapons are fab, especially the ultimate items. All in all a great game and definitely one for everybody's collection.

PAUL

Castlevania's gameplay is getting rather long in the fangs now but this only serves to assert its pedigree. In keeping with its heritage the game presents a massive selection of innovative sprites benefiting from slick animation. Though the stages against which they enact these nightmares seem insubstantial at times, the foreground images always astound — take a glance at the Leaning Tower of Pisa for proof of this! Music plays a significant role in creating the eerie atmosphere of Castlevania titles, and is another area in which this cart excels — players who have the luxury of connecting their console to a decent stereo are seriously advised to do so! As the longest running saga in video-game history Castlevania obviously warrants its cult following. Long may Simon Belmont's bloodline continue!

LONG TERM REPORT

HOUR
DAY
WEEK
MONTH
YEAR

BREAKDOWN

STRATEGY
CHALLENGE
ACTION
REFLEXES
ORIGINALITY

PRESENTATION 90

▲ An intriguing mixture of password and continues that doesn't ruin the challenge.
▼ It would have been great to have had a two-player mode.

GRAPHICS 99

▲ A vast variety of excellent backdrops and chilling sprites, all capturing the Castlevanian atmosphere. Some great effects.

SOUND 92

▲ Fabulous music that spurs you on, but is only best appreciated with a pair of headphones for the great stereo effects.

PLAYABILITY 91

▲ Castlevania's strongest feature is its excellent gameplay. Every level is action-packed and the 'feel' of the control is perfect, with immediate response.
▼ Nothing strikingly original.

LASTABILITY 87

▲ It gets harder after a couple of easy levels. It's addictive from beginning to end.
▼ You'll finish it within a few weeks.

OVERALL 90

One of the most playable actions games on the Megadrive, and sitting a good head and shoulders above recent platform releases. Blood curdlingly good fun!

Castlevania

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MEGA GAME

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW SUPPLEMENT No. 1